

You Can Call Me Tom

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Tom that's my name, short for Thomas or Tommy.

Tommy Gun

'Yes, Tommy Gun' I like that.

I'm one of the invisible people.

Right now. I'm sitting on a bench by a rubbish bin.

I've got my eye on that rubbish bin. Because in that rubbish bin is a pair of shoes.

Black round toed shoes, bit scuffed but I can buff 'em up real good. I can.

Army man. I am, shoes, boots all need to be shone.

My Drill Sergeant used to say to me 'Tommy you keep those boots polished and you'll go far, I tell you that my lad. Your Country will be as proud as punch of you'.

Polished shoes that's the answer.

It's because I've got old plimsolls on. That's why I'm invisible, that's why people think I make the place look untidy.

So no one's going to take my shoes. They just need a bit of polish. Then I'll be back on track and My Country will be proud of me again.

'I wonder where Jock is?'

Haven't seen him for a long time.

Oh yes, I know, Jock's dead.

Did he die because he had scuffed shoes on?

No, he got a bullet in the brain. That's it I remember now. Bullet right between the eyes.

Northern Ireland, that's where we were. In Northern Ireland. Standing shoulder to shoulder watching out for each other, like we always do. I was looking down at my shoes, admiring myself in them. When a 'ping' sound whizzed right by my ear. I turned to Jock, to see if he'd heard the 'ping' sound. But he'd fallen to the ground, just like a sack of potatoes. He'd made a right

mess of his shoes. The blood. Bright red, sticky and steaming had covered his polished shoes and turned them all inky looking.

It's getting dark now. Good that means I can put my feet up soon and relax.

Being on guard duty, watching over my shoes has left me tired. So tired. But mission accomplished my shoes are still in the rubbish bin.

Is that snow falling out of the sky?

It snowed a lot in Northern Ireland.

Me and Jock always said how it was either, bloody snowing or raining.

It's snow. Yes, snow. I don't feel cold. No not one bit. That's my Army training, made a man of me it did. Made me a man so that I could fight for Queen and Country.

'God save our gracious Queen.....' Nice lady. I've never met her of course. Too important to want to meet the likes of me.

They said they'd look after me and I suppose they have. Nice people giving me my new shoes in that rubbish bin.

So tired. Oh look the snow's covering me all up, like a nice white clean blanket.

I'm not cold.

Think I'll close my eyes, just for a second.

But first I'll take one last look to make sure no one's taken my shoes.